

BETHEL LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

(EXCERPTS)

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FEBRUARY 14, 2022 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lydda Mansfield, President

Lori Sebastian, Vice President

Danny Elam

Natalie Donahue

Jessica Franz

1 (Neola - excerpt begins at 1:33 of  
2 recording.)

3 MRS. MANSFIELD: And moving on to  
4 item 12, Board items, the consideration and  
5 development of policies. Okay. Mr. Firks, I know  
6 we have some stuff in executive on this.

7 We had a proposal of a policy sent to  
8 us by a Board member and we were just going to  
9 kind of talk, too, about how policies come to be  
10 on Bethel's Board and what the process is for  
11 that.

12 So when we want a new policy  
13 developed, and what that process is, we work with  
14 a company called Neola, the -- they used to be the  
15 Northeast Ohio Learning Association or Learning  
16 Assistance Company, I believe it is, and their  
17 process for their business, what they do is they  
18 coordinate about 400 policies that we have.

19 They're responsible for making sure  
20 that those policies talk to each other well and  
21 that a policy doesn't contradict another policy  
22 and that they're kept up-to-date when the laws  
23 change, when the case law changes, when statutes  
24 change, federally and at the state, things like  
25 that.

1                   So we consult with them twice  
2 annually. Mr. Firks has a meeting coming up  
3 actually with our representative, Norm Burkhardt,  
4 this week, actually. He's due for his first  
5 update of 2022.

6                   And so we rely on them quite heavily  
7 for those updates, as do most districts. They  
8 work with actually six states I believe now but  
9 they're really heavily relied on in the state.

10                  One of the other partners you could  
11 go to and contract with this is the OSBA, the Ohio  
12 School Board Association. There are some other  
13 businesses around that do those sorts of things,  
14 but Neola is our choice. We've used them for a  
15 great many number of years.

16                  So when we say, hey, we notice this  
17 policy doesn't feel right or we've heard it needs  
18 to be changed, we may call Norm up and say, I know  
19 it's not time for our annual update, but we want  
20 to tweak this or we feel like it needs to be  
21 changed, what are your thoughts.

22                  We can kind of contact him in the  
23 middle of the year, but often he's already hit us  
24 with that update or he's already emailed and said,  
25 hey, this is changing, I'll get with you soon. So

1 he's pretty on top of things for us.

2 If in the course of that he doesn't  
3 touch us on -- with a policy that we feel needs to  
4 be updated, we can send him a policy, and we've  
5 done that with the one that a Board member sent us  
6 recently, and say, hey, this is one we'd like to  
7 propose.

8 We would like to go have this added,  
9 do you have something that's similar to this that  
10 we can look at, some language that you may  
11 recommend that's been run through your staff and  
12 your attorneys that are the experts on this stuff  
13 or -- or not, what are your thoughts, and he will  
14 come back to us with either some recommended  
15 language that they do support and therefore give  
16 us legal backing for and that works well and  
17 meshes well with our existing policies or he may  
18 come back and say, we don't have anything for  
19 that.

20 You're free to go to your attorneys  
21 and get that reviewed, but just remember that if  
22 you decide to adopt that policy, we're not going  
23 to stand behind that policy should you choose to  
24 make that among your policies, and there -- if  
25 there's a contradiction with another policy that

1 arises that causes you a legal issue, again, not  
2 our problem.

3 So that means that the whole contract  
4 we have with them would be null and void in the  
5 interest of that particular policy or the  
6 conflicts that would arise as a result.

7 So that's just kind of the  
8 consideration of development of policies concept  
9 that we wanted to like bring to light and have a  
10 discussion among our members.

11 So I don't know if any other members  
12 have comments, questions. Mr. Firks, if you have  
13 anything you want to add to that discussion, have  
14 I kind of hit your relationship with Norm pretty  
15 well?

16 MR. FIRKS: Yeah. We -- we meet two  
17 three, four times a year, depending upon how heavy  
18 it is from Columbus on stuff that comes down the  
19 pike, and so our first meeting for the '22 school  
20 year will be this -- oh, boy, today's Monday --  
21 it'll be Wednesday --

22 MRS. MANSFIELD: Yeah.

23 MR. FIRKS: -- Wednesday, and then  
24 he'll go over what he's seeing and what -- what  
25 recommendations are and then I bring those to you

1 guys and then you have input on those, and we  
2 usually do two readings before we --

3 MRS. MANSFIELD: Oh, yeah, I forgot  
4 about that.

5 MR. FIRKS: -- we vote on a policy.

6 MRS. MANSFIELD: Yeah.

7 MR. FIRKS: So it's not just a blind  
8 approval. You go through them a couple of times  
9 and it provides opportunities for Board members to  
10 come up with questions, hopefully provide those  
11 ahead of time so that I can get them to Norm and  
12 then have answers for meetings.

13 MRS. MANSFIELD: Yeah. And it's not  
14 like cut-and-dried, either. It's not like this is  
15 the only policy you can have about this concept.  
16 He'll give us options; he'll say, it feels like  
17 for the other policies you have, maybe this  
18 version or this language is better that meshes  
19 better with yours or here are two or three you can  
20 kind of choose from.

21 He does give us some options. It's  
22 not like this is the only way or the highway, like  
23 we do have some choices that are -- that you guys  
24 will discuss or that you may bring to us and say  
25 this or this.

1 MR. FIRKS: Uh-hum.

2 MRS. MANSFIELD: And additionally,  
3 there are updates that are posted on their -- on  
4 our Board docs. We'll have here are the updates  
5 that are coming additionally.

6 MR. FIRKS: Yeah.

7 MRS. MANSFIELD: So we know kind of  
8 before Mr. Firks goes into that meeting, here are  
9 some things that are going to be coming our way  
10 that we can look at and be made aware of at the  
11 same time.

12 And you know, we also hear from OSBA.  
13 We get emails pretty regularly as Board members  
14 that the laws are changing, Ohio's about to have a  
15 meeting about this, or there's been a federal  
16 change.

17 We get pretty -- you guys get a lot  
18 of items -- I know I do. You guys get them, too,  
19 I assume. I'm not the only one. I know I'm not  
20 the only one -- where we know that there are some  
21 things that have been changed or that -- that's  
22 going to cause a change in our policies, and  
23 there's going to be some ripples that come down  
24 the pike.

25 So just wanted to have that

1 conversation so that no one feels slighted or no  
2 one feels like we're ignoring them when they say  
3 that they want a policy put just automatically  
4 perhaps brought before the Board or to have a  
5 conversation about things, but when we do talk to  
6 Norm or when something does go through that  
7 process or, you know, what have you, we will then  
8 put it on the agenda, we'll have a couple  
9 readings, we'll have some conversations about it  
10 to let people digest it, really think it through,  
11 you know.

12                   The difference between a policy and a  
13 resolution, resolutions don't require two  
14 readings. Resolutions are an opportunity where  
15 our attorney has said, I feel like if you want to  
16 make a statement about something, you have an  
17 opportunity to do a resolution, such as with the  
18 annexation. We recently did a resolution about  
19 the annexation back in November, October?

20                   MR. FIRKS: Uh-hum. Yeah.

21                   MRS. MANSFIELD: When was that?

22                   MR. FIRKS: It was October, I  
23 believe.

24                   MRS. MANSFIELD: October? Yeah, and  
25 the Board got together and said, you know, we feel



1 strongly that if an annexation were to happen,  
2 that they should do something to control like  
3 roadways and growth, you know, and possibly the  
4 County can help out with that.

5 MR. FIRKS: We did a res -- we did a  
6 resolution last school year in support of the Fair  
7 School Funding Act.

8 MRS. MANSFIELD: Yeah.

9 MR. FIRKS: We thought it'd have a  
10 great impact on Bethel Local Schools --

11 MRS. MANSFIELD: Absolutely.

12 MR. FIRKS: -- in adding some  
13 additional revenue to our district from the State  
14 of Ohio. We obviously have the right to petition  
15 our government to impact change.

16 MRS. MANSFIELD: Uh-hum. Sure.

17 MR. FIRKS: And so we wrote a  
18 resolution, sent it off to our local reps and our  
19 State reps to say, hey, this is a good thing for  
20 Bethel. We would appreciate your support for the  
21 Fair School Funding Act.

22 MRS. MANSFIELD: Yeah. So it's kind  
23 of a way for the Board to message without -- we're  
24 not -- we're not putting out policy, we're putting  
25 out messages, and resolutions are more messages

1    than they are policy.

2                   That's never the intent with a  
3    resolution generally is they're not meant to  
4    change our policy, they're meant to signal our  
5    feelings about things generally speaking, and we  
6    try to keep statute language, you know, legal  
7    language, case law, things like that are generally  
8    not mentioned in a resolution.

9                   We tend to try and keep it more of,  
10   you know, the Board feels that whereas this --  
11   this -- this situation exists, this situation  
12   exists; thereby, the Board asks that.

13                   So we may direct Mr. Firks to do  
14   something, we may ask that our legislators do  
15   something. You know, it's more requests and  
16   feelings and position as opposed to actual policy  
17   that would be in our policy handbook. So that's  
18   the feeling, anyway, or how it's been explained to  
19   me.

20                   When you speak contemporaneously,  
21   sometimes you say things not exactly the way you  
22   mean, so I apologize if I didn't say that exactly  
23   right, but that's my impression.

24                   Anybody have any corrections or  
25   tweaks with things like -- you don't feel like I

1 said correctly?

2 So okay. Anything else further under  
3 item A or that anybody wants to add? Mrs. Franz,  
4 I see you reaching for your mike.

5 MRS. FRANZ: So is this where I have  
6 the opportunity to speak on the one resolution?

7 MRS. MANSFIELD: We're moving to item  
8 B here in just a second.

9 MRS. FRANZ: Okay.

10 MRS. MANSFIELD: So anything further  
11 on development of policies or consideration of  
12 policies? Anyone?

13 MRS. FRANZ: What item are we on  
14 right now?

15 MRS. MANSFIELD: We're on item 12(A).

16 MRS. FRANZ: 12(A). Okay. Okay. So  
17 that is -- that is not what you guys tucked me  
18 under? Is that the next item, then, is that what  
19 we're saying?

20 MRS. MANSFIELD: So we're about to  
21 move -- we're about to move to 12(B) in just a  
22 second.

23 MRS. FRANZ: Okay.

24 MRS. MANSFIELD: So anything further  
25 under 12(A)?

1 MRS. FRANZ: I don't think so.

2 (Excerpt ends at 1:41:30 of  
3 recording.)

4 \* \* \*

5 (Board resolution - excerpt begins at  
6 1:41:31 of recording.)

7 MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Moving on to  
8 12(B), then, we have a resolution that our  
9 attorney has prepared stating that whereas the  
10 Board has been advised by its attorneys about the  
11 law regarding transgender rights, and it goes on  
12 and talks about some of --

13 (Audience member shouting.)

14 MRS. MANSFIELD: -- regarding  
15 transgender rights; and whereas the Board's been  
16 provided legal analysis regarding these students'  
17 rights; and whereas in addition to the legal  
18 rights of transgender students, the Board hereby  
19 declares that all students shall be guaranteed an  
20 educational environment free from discrimination  
21 on the basis of sex, including discrimination in  
22 the form of sexual harassment and including  
23 discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation  
24 and gender identity as determined by case law; and  
25 whereas the Board maintains the tremendous

1 importance of protecting the privacy of all  
2 students and ensuring that all students are  
3 treated equally while having equal access to our  
4 educational program, now therefore, be it resolved  
5 that this Board directs its administrative staff  
6 to formalize its guidelines for addressing student  
7 identity issues in the following ways:

8           A, consult with the district's Neola  
9 representative to verify whether a policy or  
10 administrative guideline update specific to  
11 transgender student restroom use or gender  
12 identity beyond existing antidiscrimination and  
13 antiharassment policies is either warranted,  
14 recommended, supported, or available.

15           B, post written district protocols  
16 currently in practice on district website  
17 outlining the mandatory case-by-case meeting  
18 regarding gender identity assertion between the  
19 administration, parent if student is under 18, and  
20 student to take place prior to the implementation  
21 of any accommodations to discuss what supports  
22 will be implemented.

23           And C, determine at the building  
24 level whether there are any necessary or relevant  
25 updates needed to student handbooks related to

1 above district protocols or regarding disciplinary  
2 actions for any improper usage of restrooms by  
3 students who have not adhered to district  
4 procedure for gender identity assertion or in  
5 cases of harassment of those who have.

6 Be it further resolved that these  
7 guidelines be presented to this Board for review  
8 and input prior to final publication.

9 So there we have it, and this is on  
10 for a motion and a second and a possible vote.

11 (Audience member shouting.)

12 MRS. MANSFIELD: Again, I ask, is  
13 there a motion for this resolution or is there --  
14 is there discussion?

15 (Audience members shouting.)

16 MRS. MANSFIELD: Mrs. Franz, did you  
17 say you had discussion on this item, please?  
18 Again, the Board is trying to have a discussion  
19 about this item, about their Board business,  
20 please. We'll have public discussion after these  
21 Board items, please.

22 (Audience members shouting.)

23 MRS. FRANZ: I believe -- I ask that  
24 this come after the public discussion.

25 (Audience members shouting and

1   applauding.)

2                   MRS. FRANZ:   Before we go over this  
3   for discussion right now, I'd like to go through,  
4   you know, some of the concerns I have with this  
5   particular resolution.

6                   MRS. MANSFIELD:   Sure.

7                   MRS. FRANZ:   So the -- I would like  
8   to point out that we have never been collectively  
9   as a Board in executive session with an attorney  
10  present to have a discussion on this.

11                   Neither have we had legal opinions in  
12  hand from the -- the white papers and from the two  
13  attorneys that we have retained in the school  
14  district until I did request to see those at the  
15  February 1st meeting.

16                   In a recent discussion I did have  
17  with John, one of our retained attorneys, he  
18  recommended that we all meet together to get our  
19  questions answered and discuss how we'd like to  
20  move forward, and he did make a great point that  
21  40 percent of the Board wasn't present when  
22  initially faced with this issue.

23                   So additionally, this decision was  
24  unilaterally made by administration, announced by  
25  our newly elected Board president on January 10th,

1 again, without the Board ever having the official  
2 white paper copy of the opinions in hand.

3 So with this resolution, the been  
4 advised in this context of the resolution I just  
5 want to clarify means that written legal opinions  
6 that the Board has received, okay, so after I  
7 asked on February 1st.

8 I also want to point out that case  
9 law is not statutory law, and I clarified with the  
10 school attorney that there is no existing  
11 statutory law, state or federal, that dictates  
12 that we must allow a trans-identifying student --

13 (Audience members applauding.)

14 MRS. FRANZ: -- to use the restroom  
15 of the sex they identify with, and also,  
16 furthermore, he stated that the Bethel School  
17 Board could choose to continue operating in the  
18 unwritten practical policy of the district, what  
19 has been our guiding practice for decades here.

20 So he did say that we had that  
21 opportunity and that -- that decision to do that  
22 as a Board, and I would also like to just point  
23 out the section under B there, that it is -- this  
24 asks the question, why are we -- it seems like  
25 we're circumventing our responsibility to make a



1 new guiding policy for the district regarding  
2 restroom use, and why are we going straight to  
3 identifying administrative guidelines? It seems  
4 backwards.

5                   It's my understanding our  
6 administrative guidelines are developed to  
7 implement the guiding policies of the district  
8 which are created by the Board, and consulting  
9 with Neola, we could do that, but the ultimate  
10 decision in determining the language of the policy  
11 lies with the Board.

12                   So -- and I also would like to  
13 suggest if we're going to create a policy, you  
14 know, getting other policy-making organizations  
15 involved, the OSBA, maybe Protect Ohio Children,  
16 but honestly, I don't think a policy, a written  
17 policy, is needed because the Board could decide  
18 to return to the practical policy of the district.  
19 We do have that option --

20                   (Audience members applauding.)

21                   MRS. FRANZ: -- and which already  
22 allows for guidelines to separate bathrooms on the  
23 basis of sex.

24                   (Audience members applauding.)

25                   MRS. FRANZ: So those are the

1 comments I have regarding this resolution.

2 MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Further  
3 comments, please?

4 (Audience members applauding.)

5 MRS. MANSFIELD: Are there further  
6 comments from other from other members, please?  
7 Okay. So I would just say that I guess in  
8 response, that there may not be statutory law but  
9 there is case law, and our two attorneys have  
10 advised us separately that we must follow case  
11 law.

12 (Audience members shouting.)

13 MRS. MANSFIELD: The guidelines that  
14 we have to implement -- the guidelines that we are  
15 implementing, our administrative guidelines,  
16 actually do follow Board policy. We have  
17 antiharassment and antidiscrimination policies in  
18 our policies already.

19 (Audience members shouting.)

20 MRS. MANSFIELD: And I feel like this  
21 is a misspeak actually to say that we can operate  
22 in the practical way we have for decades because  
23 the -- the case law has changed, and in districts  
24 like US District Court, District 6, that Ohio is a  
25 part of, has already stated very clearly how the

1 district must operate. Per our attorneys' white  
2 papers, which are quite extensive, it says very  
3 clearly how we must operate.

4 So that's really -- that's my  
5 rebuttal and my response to what we have. We do  
6 have policies in place, we do have to obey them.  
7 It is the law, and that is what we have to do. So  
8 that's what I have to say.

9 MRS. FRANZ: So just so everyone's  
10 aware, I did submit a resolution that our  
11 attorney, John, did look over line-by-line. He  
12 offered some suggestions, most of which I took,  
13 and this is kind of a counter-resolution to what  
14 was proposed here, and it was -- I don't believe  
15 it was added to the agenda, or there may not have  
16 been enough time to add it, but I do have it with  
17 me here tonight and I could read the  
18 counter-resolution and we can have a discussion on  
19 that now or later.

20 And again, I just want to reiterate  
21 that talking about policy here tonight, this is  
22 something we -- we don't really need to have a  
23 policy for if the Board makes the decision to  
24 return to the practical policy that has been the  
25 district, you know, guidelines for decades, and we

1 can make that decision and we can walk back the  
2 decision that was made recently.

3 MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay.

4 (Audience members applauding.)

5 MRS. MANSFIELD: So any further  
6 comments about this item from any other Board  
7 members? Mrs. Donahue?

8 MRS. DONAHUE: I'd just like to ask  
9 if we could delay this for another meeting, remove  
10 it from the agenda tonight and delay it for --

11 MRS. MANSFIELD: So that was going be  
12 my next question actually, like is there going to  
13 be a motion and a second on this. Does anyone  
14 have a motion or a second?

15 (Audience members shouting.)

16 MRS. MANSFIELD: It's coming. So it  
17 does seem clear --

18 (Audience members shouting.)

19 MRS. MANSFIELD: I would like to  
20 speak in my meeting, please. It seems clear  
21 that -- there goes the gavel.

22 (Audience members cheering.)

23 MRS. MANSFIELD: -- that this  
24 resolution is something that needs to be put aside  
25 for just a moment.

1                   Mrs. Franz, you did ask for an  
2 executive session with our attorney this evening;  
3 is that correct?

4                   MRS. FRANZ: I believe when I talked  
5 to him last, he said that he had had a  
6 conversation with you and possibly the  
7 superintendent on executive session and then I  
8 walked in today or yesterday and confirmed that  
9 that executive session was going to take place.

10                  MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. So we will do  
11 that, we'll proceed with that, and at the moment I  
12 see no reason to continue with this particular  
13 item on the agenda at the moment. We'll just bail  
14 on it pretty much entirely. Let's just scrap it  
15 at the moment.

16                  (Audience members cheering.)

17                  MRS. MANSFIELD: Understanding with  
18 that two conflicting resolutions anyway, it just  
19 really doesn't make sense at the moment and we'll  
20 just move on.

21                  (Audience members shouting.)

22                  MRS. MANSFIELD: No. It means we're  
23 not voting on this particular Board resolution at  
24 this time. Yeah. I'm just being clear as well.

25                  (Excerpt ends at 1:53 of recording.)

1                                   \*    \*    \*

2                                   (Q&A - excerpt begins at 2:01:30 of  
3 recording.)

4                                   MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Last item  
5 under Board items for item D is the proposal for a  
6 community town hall Q&A.

7                                   I feel like this is a pretty  
8 essential item that we can do where we can  
9 actually have questions asked regarding the  
10 transgender issue as opposed to, you know, people  
11 making commentary.

12                                   It might be more productive because  
13 you can actually have some experts come in who  
14 would handle any potential cases that might go  
15 forward, have our attorneys here, have actual  
16 questions where even we have questions that maybe  
17 aren't fully answered and vetted.

18                                   We can have the US Attorney General  
19 rep who would handle any cases that would go to  
20 federal court, you could have our own Ohio  
21 Department of Education area rep who would receive  
22 any complaints from any of our transgender  
23 students and our families, maybe a plaintiff's  
24 attorney that would handle a case for those types  
25 of people, possibly an Ohio Office of Civil Rights

1 representative who, again, would be involved in  
2 these kinds of cases and put together a panel of  
3 experts, people who really, truly, genuinely know  
4 how these cases would go, the ins and out and the  
5 nuances as opposed to the folks like us, who I  
6 don't really know the ins and outs of how that  
7 goes, I genuinely don't, and I would like know,  
8 and there are questions that I would like to ask  
9 and I'm sure that there are members of our  
10 community who would, too.

11               So I would like to propose to our  
12 Board that we put together a panel like that. It  
13 can't happen next week because getting on folks  
14 like this' calendar on mutual days might take four  
15 to six weeks.

16               It could be, you know, the end of  
17 March before something like that could come  
18 together, but I think it could be a lot more  
19 productive than a lot of the conversations that  
20 we've had so far, especially amongst ourselves,  
21 and we could get some actual information that  
22 could be fruitful.

23               So I don't know how you guys feel,  
24 but what are your thoughts? What are your  
25 thoughts?

1                   MR. ELAM: I agree. I think -- I  
2 think -- I know.

3                   MRS. MANSFIELD: Do you want this  
4 one?

5                   MR. ELAM: I agree. I think a  
6 town -- a town forum, a community forum, would be  
7 a great idea and it -- I think we should run with  
8 it.

9                   MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Mrs. Franz,  
10 you want to speak into the microphone, so --

11                  MRS. FRANZ: I don't feel -- I also  
12 agree that a -- a community forum is a great idea  
13 and I believe that it should have been done from  
14 the get-go regarding this decision.

15                  (Audience members applauding.)

16                  MRS. DONAHUE: I'm in agreement that  
17 we plan for something and have a town hall.

18                  MRS. MANSFIELD: Okay. Just to be  
19 clear, though, like if we were to bring in folks  
20 like this, it can't be an opportunity for people  
21 to like, you know, just express opinions. It has  
22 to be legitimate questions.

23                  We want questions asked to get actual  
24 answers, so people would have to come with an  
25 actual question to ask these folks to get an



1 actual answer, not just to do -- not just to like,  
2 you know, give them an opinion. We need to  
3 actually solicit questions.

4 So if you were going to come and  
5 attend something like that, members of this panel,  
6 my Board members, friends here amongst the Board,  
7 are you prepared to come with actual questions to  
8 get actual answers as opposed to, you know, just  
9 an opinion?

10 (Audience members shouting.)

11 MRS. MANSFIELD: I'm sure they  
12 understand what the opinions of the community are,  
13 these folks, like an attorney general and an ODE  
14 rep.

15 (Audience members shouting.)

16 MRS. MANSFIELD: We're about to have  
17 that time. I'm discussing with the Board, please.

18 MRS. FRANZ: I'm sorry. Were you  
19 posing that question to the Board members?

20 MRS. MANSFIELD: So to the Board  
21 members, are you okay with changing our -- we  
22 can't -- we wouldn't have the same rules we would  
23 have for regular addressing the Board, you know,  
24 hearing of the public rules.

25 We would have to develop a different

1 set of guidelines for that because we'd have to be  
2 more like a -- you have a certain amount of time  
3 to ask a question and then possibly a follow-up  
4 question but it can't be the you get five minutes  
5 to just say whatever kind of a thing. I don't  
6 think that would be as productive.

7 Does that make sense? So --

8 (Audience members shouting.)

9 MRS. MANSFIELD: Sweet. Okay.

10 MRS. FRANZ: I think the community  
11 town hall is a great idea and I think my own  
12 concern is that we have a wide variety of experts  
13 so that we --

14 MRS. MANSFIELD: I'm sorry,  
15 Mrs. Franz. I can't hear you. I can't hear you.

16 MRS. FRANZ: I think my only concern  
17 is that we do get a -- that we -- in order to  
18 fully vet this, that we get all sides of the  
19 issue, so I'm interested in having an attorney  
20 there that there are different sides there, you're  
21 getting different opinions, so that we have our  
22 Board attorney there, we have, if he's available,  
23 John.

24 We could perhaps have another  
25 attorney there that can provide a different

1 perspective on what our responsibility here is at  
2 Bethel.

3 I've spoken with three attorneys who  
4 have a very different idea of what our obligation  
5 is, what -- what we would need to do in the  
6 situation, and also, you know, I just want to make  
7 sure we're not going to fill the time with a bunch  
8 of bureaucracy.

9 (Audience members applauding.)

10 MRS. MANSFIELD: Sure. I don't think  
11 it's anyone's intent to fill it with bureaucracy.  
12 I don't think so.

13 I would be concerned with too much  
14 additional attorneys. Clearly we pay district  
15 attorneys. You know, we -- we already pay  
16 attorneys to represent the district that were  
17 already, you know, attorneys that were here before  
18 I came, attorneys that have -- you know, Mr. Firks  
19 has worked with them in other districts as well.

20 So I don't want to have nonvetted, I  
21 guess, attorneys. I don't want to have too many,  
22 but certainly, certainly we could have one  
23 attorney that perhaps does not represent the  
24 district in addition to --

25 (Audience members shouting.)

1 MRS. MANSFIELD: -- in addition to a  
2 plaintiff's attorney, as was suggested, that would  
3 be someone who would represent the student and  
4 their family should a case be brought. I think  
5 that's reasonable to have that side represented as  
6 well. Fair?

7 MRS. FRANZ: You mean from both  
8 sides? Is that what you're saying? Like from  
9 both sides of the issue we would have attorneys  
10 represented?

11 MRS. MANSFIELD: Sure.

12 MRS. FRANZ: And if cost is an issue,  
13 I would be happy to cover that cost to have an  
14 attorney there. So I'm not asking the Board to  
15 cover that.

16 (Audience members shouting.)

17 MRS. MANSFIELD: Sure, that's fair.  
18 Okay. So it sounds like that's something that  
19 everyone's okay with and that I can like start  
20 working on putting together and trying to get a  
21 date that calendars work for the suggested people  
22 that we have.

23 And Mrs. Franz, if you can get with  
24 me and like give me some names of people you would  
25 like to have included and I can try and reach out

1 with them, too. Is that great for you?

2 If anyone else has ideas of folks  
3 that they would like to include, please also, you  
4 know, reach out, and you, too, Mrs. Donahue.  
5 Okay? And Mr. Firks as well. Okay?

6 Okay. Great. That's awesome. I'm  
7 very excited to have that because I think getting  
8 actual answers from people who would actually  
9 handle these cases would be so productive. Okay.

10 (Audience members shouting.)

11 (Excerpt ends at 2:09 of recording.)

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1 STATE OF OHIO )

2 COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY ) SS: CERTIFICATE

3 I, Caryl L. Blevins, a Notary Public within  
4 and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and  
5 qualified,

6 DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the above-named  
7 proceeding was reduced to writing by me  
8 stenographically from a recording to the best of  
9 my ability and thereafter reduced to typewriting.

10 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative  
11 or Attorney of either party, in any manner  
12 interested in the event of this action, nor am I,  
13 or the court reporting firm with which I am  
14 affiliated, under a contract as defined in Civil  
15 Rule 28(D).

16 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
17 my hand and seal of office at Dayton, Ohio, on  
18 this 5th day of December, 2022.

19

20 /s/ Caryl L. Blevins  
21 CARYL L. BLEVINS, RPR, CRR  
22 NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF OHIO  
23 My commission expires 7-16-2023  
24  
25